

## Farmer-Herder Conflicts and Rural Development in Kogi State, Nigeria

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Famer-Herder conflicts are major contributors to Nigeria's poor security index. Critical to this position is the fact that these conflicts occur in almost every part of the country. The study assesses the extent to which Farmer-Herder conflicts have affected agricultural activities, impact of Farmer-Herder conflict on Healthcare Delivery and impact of Farmer-Herder conflicts on educational development in Kogi State. The study is premised on the Relative Deprivation theory, and adopts the qualitative method via survey research design using purposive/ sampling techniques to select 22 study participants across the three LGA of study. Findings from the study reveal among others that; farmer-herder conflicts in the study area affect agricultural productivity, blockage of cattle routes, watering point and cattle rustling, effect of the conflict is decline in social activities, business, rural-urban migration destruction of Health Care Centers, markets, schools which are aspect of rural development and industrialization to a great extent affects rural development. Health Care Services were severely affected in the rural areas under study and farmer and herder within the locality suffers from these lack of poor health care services, and educational sector also suffers immensely as schools in these rural areas were shut down due to this crises thereby undermining rural educational development which advances literacy level as core indices of rural development. The study among others recommends that; Since farmer-herder conflict were land use resource based conflict, sensitization, awareness creation and proper education by the federal government through the miyeti allah for adoption of modern approach of rearing cattles via cattle ranching rather than sedementry method, there should be political will by the federal government to implement the ranching model as it will keep the herds of cattle away from the farms of farmers and away from major roads, it would not only guarantee peaceful co-existence of farmers and herdsmen, it would also enhance productivity of livestock and contribute to food security in Nigeria and the west Africa sub-region. Farmers/cattle herders' associations should make more efforts in preaching the implications of the conflict on the people and the community in general.*

**Keywords:** *Farmer-Herder, Conflicts, Rural-development, Agro-productivity, Healthcare services & Socio-economic development*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The conflict between man and his fellow man is a prevalent issue globally. These conflicts started a long time ago from the beginning of creation in the Garden of Eden (Genesis, 1:1-20). They occurred in a series where they began mainly in central and western as well northern Europe majorly in Ireland in the 16th and 17th century in Europe. According to Pew Research Center, the violence between the natives ranges from land use resource, ethnicity and religious conflicts in Europe records increases

year after the other (Olayoku, 2014). In Africa without exception to the western region of the continent, they had been series of conflict between man and his fellow man to the point of escalating to a civil war, case in point Rwanda civil (genocide) war of 1994 between the Hutu (farmers) and the Tutsi (herders), Liberia civil war, Nigerian Biafran civil war of 1967-1970, Farmer-Herder conflict in Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Cameroun and Farmer-Herder conflict in Nigeria, (Obi, Job, Letswa, Isaq and Kolawole, 2018). It was gathered that before the beginning of 20th century, such problems were mainly restricted to the savanna belts such as Guinea, Sudan and Sahel Savanna of West Africa (Ofuoku, 2010). Cattle rearing were mainly prevalent in these belts and crop productions were carried out in raining season and are usually in small scale. The method was of great advantage to cattle herder as they are left with a vast area of grass land to pasture. Within the West African sub-region, it was recorded that more than 12 million people depend on the production of livestock as their primary means of support whereas over 70 million people in the same region also depend on livestock and livestock-related enterprises for their livelihood (Tukur, 2013).

Tonah (2006) noted in the light of the above that since the 1950s, there has been a growth in human as well as livestock population in the coastal countries of West Africa. While Yahaya, (2008) opined that since the Sahelian drought of the 1970s and 1980s, and the additional migration of a huge number of herders into the suburbs of the wet forest zone of West Africa, there has been a massive increase of the incidence of Farmer-Herder conflict. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nation with a conglomeration of over 250 ethnic groups. Every ethnic group has its distinctive social culture and its pattern of political economy. Although with three dominant languages including the Hausa/Fulani group domiciled in the North, the Igbo group domiciled in the Eastern and Southern parts and the Yoruba group domiciled in the West. The Hausa/Fulani groups are mainly farmers and herdsmen. The Igbos is predominantly industrialists and fishermen, while the Yoruba group is predominantly farmers (Aluko, 2017). Irrespective of the traditional occupational distributions across the ethnic groups in Nigeria, there is no strict restriction whatsoever to movement or interactions of people within and across ethnic divides. The foregoing is reinforced by the Nigerian constitution of 1999 as amended which allows every citizen to conduct his/her business in any part of the country as desired (Nigeria Constitution, 1999).

Farmer and Herder conflict have remained the most preponderant resource-use conflict in north central Nigeria (Orogun, 2017; Tenuche & Ifatimehin, 2009). The necessity to provide food, crop, animal as well as raw materials for industry and export in order to meet ever-growing demands, has led to intensification of land use (Nyong and Fiki, 2005). The competition between farmer and herder, however, has often times turned into serious hostilities and social friction in many parts of Nigeria. The conflicts have demonstrated high potential to exacerbate the insecurity and food crisis particularly in rural communities where most of the conflicts are localized, with reverberating consequences nationwide (Adebayo and Olaniyi, 2008; Egwu, 2009; Eyekpimi, 2016). Lack of security of lives and property of the citizen is a severe hindrance to meaningful socioeconomic development. A climate of fear will frighten domestic and foreign investors. At the heart of many of these conflicts is access to resources and control over the distribution of benefits. This struggle for resources has led to a broad sense of insecurity opportunism and pursuit of self-help strategies across the country and have represented divided crisis in communities that have led to heightened tension between and within groups. The Farmer-Herder conflicts have a direct impact on people's lives and livelihoods. This conflict caused a high poverty rate and unhealthy competition. The proportion of Nigerians who are below the poverty line is 70%. Nigeria is the most populous country and is composed of more than 250 ethnic groups (Fage and Alabi, 2017). However, people living in some areas are experiencing poverty, and they have to relocate to different places (Gefu, 1990). These conflicts created circles of extreme poverty and hunger, and lead to more violence, especially when

either the farmer or the herdsmen is categorized into a group relating to a particular religion, tribe or region (Ibrahim, Adesiji, Tyabo, Umar, Ndanitsa and Abdullazeez, 2014).

The persistence and consistency of farmer and herder conflicts portends grave socio-economic consequences (Adisa & Adekunle, 2010). Farm products which also serve as Nigerian foreign exchange products are destroyed during attack. These farm products like cash crops add to Nigerians' National Domestic Products but when these crops are destroyed it leads to depletion of economic growth. Economically Nigeria does not fare well with the incessant attacks on farmers and farm produce by the Fulani herdsmen, in the advent of conflict. On the other hand, cattle rearing has in no small measure contributed to the Nigerian economy.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The Sahel and the Sahara Desert stretches across over fifteen countries from North, west and central Africa and these areas is home for pastoralists, farmers, fishermen, traders, among others. The ravaging effect of the drought which could be harmful to the cattle was what forced the Fulani herder to migrate down south and some areas of North central Nigeria like Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, and Kogi (Obi, Job, Ishaq, Letswa and Kolawole, 2018). The migration of these herdsmen was said to have caused more harm than good in all these areas. Although clashes between "Farmers and Herders" are not new in Kogi State, the nature, magnitude and frequency of occurrence in recent times leave little to be desired especially in Bagana, Agbenema, (Omala LGA) Bassa/Iyade(Bassa LGA) and Akojeju-Ikogba community in Dekina LGAs of Kogi state. These herdsmen are mainly seen escorting their cattle armed with sophisticated weapons with which they protect their cattle from rural farmers attack for destroying their crops, they kill (murder), vandalize; burn down houses, annihilates, sack entire villages, rape, rendering a debilitating effects on rural development, especially as its concerns agricultural activities, rice crops, fish farming, resulting in the short supply of staple foods as well as cash crops.

The fright of the conflict lies in the preliminary investigations by Obi (2019) in his thesis titled examination of the effect of Farmer-Herder conflict on development in Omala LGA, which shows that a total of 500, persons were displaced as at 2016-2018 which excludes the over 100 persons estimated to have lost their lives to the conflicts, and over 300, displaced persons who had been estimated to be finding refuge in Ankpa, Lokoja, Olamaboro in Kogi State. Also an estimated ₦1, 491, 293, 526.00 was said to be the value of household assets lost in the affected local governments. Similarly, an estimated value of foodstuff and economic trees lost in the crises stood at ₦1, 543, 259.00 while the total value of livestock lost in the crises was estimated to be ₦1, 286,409,973.00. Nevertheless, the total number of houses destroyed during the crises as at 2016-2020 stood at 343,502 which comprised 131,882 thatched-roofed houses and 211,620 zinc-roofed houses.

Also, the Obi et al (2018-2021) report indicates that the total number of villages destroyed in Iyade, Agojeju Ikpoba, Bassa, Agbenema areas were: 143, 368, 153. The worth of public facilities (schools, health centres and worship centres) destroyed in the affected local governments were valued at ₦, 700,579,460.65 and about 2000 herdsmen in these LGAs have been displaced and are on the run from these areas. The scare that comes with the magnitude of the loss in the affected communities has the capacity to reinforce the poverty situation, cause rural-urban dislocation, worsen the crime levels due to loss of livelihood, lack of incentive for farming due to insecurity of lives and property and this has implication for food security and well-being of the affected peasants. The effect of insecurity is that, it has undermined the growth and development of the study area. Kogi State has now been characterized and manifest in acrimony, incessant cases of Fulani herdsmen attack in several local governments across the State; Dekina, Bassa, Omala, Kabba/Bunnu etc. These attacks are increasingly becoming wide spread and promoting environment of tension, impunity and

uncertainty in the State. This study is focused at examining the impact of farmers'-herder conflict on rural development in Kogi State, Nigeria.

Furthermore, in Kogi State, it was recorded that there have been cases of conflicts between herder and crop farmer in Igalamela/Odolu, Ibaji/Ofu, Bassa, Omala/Dekina local governments and host of other local governments over crop destruction by cattle, killing of herder and stabbing of farmer following reprisal attacks on different occasions (Ifatimehin, 2008). These reoccurring conflicts between the herders, famers and sometimes host communities has resulted in low productivity, and disinterest in agriculture by farmers, high level of insecurity in host communities. In a recent study carried out by Obi (2019), it was reported that the violence associated with farmers versus herders has uprooted more than 100,000 people in Kogi, Benue and Enugu states, leaving many who are now staying with relatives or in the internally displaced person's camps. The researcher also added that the effect of the violence has resulted in the displacement of 400,000 people from 2010-2021 while many are still struggling to rebuild their lives.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the effects of Farmer-Herder conflict on socio-economic development in Kogi State Nigeria. Specifically, this study attempts to:

- i. Examine the extent to which Farmer-Herder conflicts have affected agricultural activities in Kogi State
- ii. Investigate the effect of Farmer-Herder conflict on Healthcare Delivery in Kogi State
- iii. Ascertain implication of Farmer-Herder conflicts on educational development in Kogi State
- iv. Access the strategies adopted in mitigating Farmer-Herders Conflicts in Bassa, Dekina and Omala L.G. As

### **Theoretical Framework (Relative Deprivation Theory)**

Frustration Aggression Theory: Frustration-aggression theory also known as the 'frustration-aggression-displacement theory', is a theory of aggression proposed by John Dollard, Neal Miller, Leonard Doob, Orval Mowrer and Robert Sears in 1939 and further developed by Neal Miller in 1941 and Leonard Berkowitz in 1961. The theory says that aggression is the result of blocking, or frustrating, a person's efforts to attain a goal (Friedman Schustack, 2014). When first formulated, the hypothesis stated that frustration always precedes aggression, and aggression is the sure consequence of frustration. Two years later, however, Miller and Sears re-formulated the hypothesis to suggest that while frustration creates a need to respond, some form of aggression is one possible outcome. Therefore, the re-formulated hypothesis stated that while frustration prompts a behavior that may or may not be aggressive, any aggressive behavior is the result of frustration, making frustration not sufficient, but a necessary condition for aggression (Zillmann Dolf, 1979). It attempts to give an explanation as to the cause of violence.

Frustration is the "condition which exists when a goal-response suffers interference", while aggression is defined as "an act whose goal-response is injury to an organism (or an organism surrogate). The theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target (scapegoat). This theory is also used to explain riots and revolutions, which both are believed to be caused by poorer and more deprived sections of society who may express their bottled up frustration and anger through violence. According to Olu-Adeyemi (2017), a number of other variables influence the use of violence as well, for example the culture, the society, and the political environment. The culture must at least accept, if not approve, violent action as a means to an end. Violence is also more likely if the current leadership and/or the socioeconomic/political system is seen as unresponsive. Olu-Adeyemi (2017)

also asserted that the central theme of the theory is that scarcity is the product of insufficient supply (impact of climate population explosion) or unequal distribution of resource as a result of deprivation which ultimately leads to aggression. On the issue of frustration, it means that one's access to means of livelihood (farming or grazing as the case may be) is being thwarted by another or possibly by particular circumstances and that one's reaction to this thwarting is that of annoyance. Olu- Adeyemi also added that, deprivation is not based on wants or needs alone, but on the wants and needs that we feel we ought to have or deserve. More often than not, the Herdsmen are frustrated due to desertification, thus, the reality is that they face forced migration and as they migrate, series of challenges are encountered which in turn brings frustration. Similarly, farmers who have struggled to cultivate farmlands also get frustrated whenever herds of cattle destroy their farmlands. The Fulani Herdsmen terror is a struggle over values and claims to scarce resources in which their aims are to neutralize, injure or to eliminate the host communities in a bid to fend for their animals. The violent activities of the Fulani Herdsmen occur because of the accumulation of residual instigator effects of frustration.

The terrorist activities of the herdsmen are traceable to the desertification that has caused depletion in grazing opportunities or scarcity of feed for their animals which in the long-run affects their economic wellbeing. If a herder loses his flock to drought and water scarcity, he may be frustrated because of the loss of livelihood. From this reality, he may be aggressive and since, he cannot channel it to the natural causes, he may in the long-run channel it to any person or group that obstructs his migration to a safe area. On the side of farmers and host communities in Nigeria frustration also occurs whenever animals of the herdsmen trample on their farmlands to eat up their crops. And because they are frustrated too, they become aggressive and channel their aggression to the herdsmen and their cows. Owing to this reality, conflict and confrontation is inevitable.

Relative deprivation theory indicates that, if natural resources or fertile land becomes scarce as a result of increase in the population of people and cattle and desertification, people who relied on the resources as their source of livelihood would probably become increasingly discontented and frustrated by their inability to grasp their own share in the scramble for available resources. And as such, conflict between the competing groups would erupt. Furthermore, the cattle herders claimed that farmers monopolized the whole land area which was hitherto free with little or no space left for the grazing of their flocks. The blockage of the cattle routes made pastoralists that were historically mobile new prisoners of limited spaces. The modern state system has rendered Fulani vulnerable to the vagaries of social and natural land scarcities.

The high rate of scarce resource is seen as the factor responsible for the grievances of cattle herders and subsequent attacks on crop farmers. Essentially, the cattle herders are aggrieved because their demands are not met even though they deserve them as Nigeria. The continued deprivation of the nomads from pasture made them more aggressive and conflict prone. The provision of grazing reserve and equal distribution of environmental resources will not solve the problem but relationship between the groups. Although there is no theory that is considered hundred percent adequate, the relative deprivation theory gives a better understanding in the explanation of cattle herders and crop farmers conflicts in these states. The theory shows that the cattle herders failed to get what they desired much, (Grazing land and access to water point because of path encroachment). And it is the lack of the adequate grazing land that may have resulted in their anger and frustration to invade crops to feed their animals and as a result, conflict erupts. However, farmers feel frustrated when their farms are invaded by the cattle herders, which may consequently result in their poverty. This might make them to attack the cattle herders for rendering them hopeless. The Relative deprivation theory also states that when a group of people compare itself with others and realize that they are better off than them then conflict continues. The Relative deprivation which leads to conflict according to Lopez-Turley (2002) can be reduced or managed by a gradual elimination of inequality which causes

value expectation and value capability to coverage, thus avoiding socio-political upheaval. This shows that, if relative equal access to pasture was given to both groups as Awogbade (1983) said that it used to be before the advent of colonialism in Jos, and then the symbiotic relationship enjoyed by the groups before would be restored.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research work mainly explored a qualitative research paradigm that largely relies on the use of in-depth interview (IDI) and key informant interview (KII) for data collection. The conceptual scope of study covers the impact of Farmer-Herder conflict on the rural Development in Kogi State. The contextual scope of study covers the several aspect of the effect of Farmer-Herder conflict such as rural-urban migration, ethnic cohesion, destruction of infrastructures, loss of lives and property amongst others. However, these studies focus on the effect of the conflict on agricultural productivity, Health care delivery and Educational development. The time scope covers the period of 2010-2023. The geographical scope of study centered on rural communities in Bassa, Dekina and Omala Local Government Areas. The study focused on the above mentioned variables because they are key indices of rural development, and the justification for 2010-2023 was that Farmer-Herder conflict was intensive during this period and led to destruction of lives and properties which are aspects of rural development. The sample size for this study was 22 respondents which were 22 victims of both the Farmer-Herder and Fulani settlers. Which are 3 community leaders, 5 youth leaders, 5 direct victims, 5 security personnel's, 2 farmers and 2 cattle herders. Purposive sampling and snowball sampling method were used in the selection. These selections were premised on how long the respondents have been in the communities, age of respondents, occupation of respondents and role in the community. The purposive selection was made because the sampled areas consist of the villages where farming and cattle rearing were most famous and the areas where crop farmer and cattle herder" conflict occurred frequently. Purposive sampling method was utilised because it concentrates on people with particular characteristic who are better positioned to answer the research question. More also because it is the method suitable for qualitative research in which the focus is often to understand complex social phenomenon. Additionally, the reason behind snowball sampling method is because most of the victims were displaced at the moment of conducting this research and there is need for reference to be able to reach them all. The information gotten from the field will be analysed descriptively using thematic analysis. This method was adopted for it describes and gives good summary of data in a way that one can easily be understand better. The study was explanatory, the interviews session with traditional leaders, community leaders, victims of Farmer-Herders conflict, Farmers and Herders and youth leaders were recorded using digital audio recorders. Conceptual Content and thematic analyses were used to analyze the qualitative data.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### **Data Presentation**

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents is represented as a prelude to the detailed analysis of the data. The demographic characteristics of a population are essential in analysing the patterns and structures of the relationships that occur among people. This may provide insight into the social and economic life of individuals as such attributes have influence on social relationship and individual behaviour. To address this objective, a total of 22 copies of the structured interview were administered the final analysis was therefore based on 22 copies of the interview questionnaire.

**Table 4.1: Presentation of Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

VARIABLES	RESPONSES	Frequency N=22	100 %
Sex	Male	12	55
	Female	10	45
Age	26-33	5	23
	34-41	5	23
	42-49	5	23
	50 and Above	7	31
Religion	Islam	7	32
	Christianity	11	50
	Others	4	18
Marital Status	Married	12	55
	Widowed	2	9
	Separated	1	5
	Divorced	3	14
	Single	4	18
Level of Education	No formal education	2	9
	Islamic/Arabic	4	18
	Primary education/	10	45
	Secondary education	4	18
	Tertiary education	2	9
Household size	1-5	5	23
	6-10	5	23
	11-14	7	31
	>14	5	23
Years of Farming/Herding experience	< 20 years	2	9
	21-30 years	4	18
	31-40 years	6	27
	41-50 years	8	36
	>50 years	2	9

**Source: Field survey, 2022**

The table indicates that majority (55 percent) of the respondents were male while the remaining 45 percent were female. This implies that there were more male than female in the study area. Data collected showed that majority (23 percent) of the respondents; fell under the age bracket of 26 - 33 years' age bracket. The respondents that fell within the 34-41 years, 42-49 years 23%, and 50 years and above were 31%. Majority of the respondents (50 percent), were Christians, Muslims, 32 percent, while 18% percent belonged to other forms of religion. This result is merely coincidental as religion is not in any way a basis for farming. Majority of the respondents (55 percent), were married while 18 percent were single. The widowed 9%, separated 5%, and divorced were 14%. Data collected showed that majority (45 percent), of the respondents had only primary school leaving certificate as their highest level of qualification, 18% had Islamic/Arabic, while (9 percent) of the respondents had no formal education, only (18 percent) of the respondents accepted that they attended and stop at secondary level. And only (9 percent) of the respondents agreed that they had high qualifications. The result is a reflection of the increasing number (31 percent), of the respondents have 11-14 as the size of their household, while 23% of the respondents said that the size of their household member

is between 1-5, 23% have 6-10 household, and above 14 household 23%. The result further reveals that 9% of the Farmers/Herders had < 20 years of farming and cattle herding experience. This suggests that the farmers/herders had more exposure to farming activities. While 18% of the respondents accepted that they had 21-30 years' experience, 27% had 31-40 years' experience, 36% had 41-50 years' experience, and 9% had above 50 years farming/herding experience in the study areas.

### Analysis of Interview Schedule

#### Objective One: To Examine the Extent to Which Farmer-Herder Conflicts Have Affected Agricultural Activity

Conflict threatens the livelihood resources of people particularly farming communities due to high dependent on natural resources for survival. Herder-farmer conflicts not only have a direct impact on the lives and livelihoods of those involved, they also disrupt and threaten the sustainability of agricultural and pastoral production in the study area. Conflict has the capacity to severely undermine and constrain development efforts by destroying infrastructure, interrupting production system and diverting resources from productive uses. These factors include political, religious, ethnic, economics, land tenure system and historical feuds.

**Question One:** From your experience as a farmer and residents of this locality, does Farmer-Herder conflict affect agricultural productivity in your area?

According to all interview respondents representing (100%)

*In Kogi State, there have been instances of conflict between cattle herders and crop farmers in Omala, Bassa, Dekina, IgalaMela/Odolu Local Government Area (LGA), Ibaji, Dekina and Ofu LGAs over crop destruction by cattle, killing of a herder and stabbing of a farmer, respectively, following reprisal attacks on different occasion's personal communication. (IDI/M/26<sup>th</sup>/Agojeju-ikpoba/ Dekina/ June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022).*

Investigation on how Farmer-Herder conflict affect agricultural productivity in the study area shows that these conflicts undermined productivity and Livelihood.

According to respondents from Agbenema Community:

*Conflict between farmer and herder resulted to outbreak of hunger and diseases, insufficient food supply to the farming community, longer time spent in the farm, decrease in farm output, poor harvest, lost of income and sustains injuries. This conflicts has some implications like it affects livelihood activities of farming communities because of burning of range land, pollution of community water source, pilfering from farms, cattle herders not obeying the elders, destruction of farmland, and herder's over stay in a location all this affects farming because our young men and women who are the manpower or workforce cant go to the farm and are running away from the community to places like Lokoja, Anyigba Ankpa, if this young once leave all who is going to farm nobody. (IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July, 2022)*

Furthermore, respondents from Iyade/Bassa communities were of the opinion that:

*When farmers and herders fight, it hurts soil biomass, conservation, and the long-term health of the environment. Herder who stay in one place too long could destroy farmland, steal from farms, or set fire to rangeland. When herders stay in one place*



*for a long time, the animals' hooves permanently harden the soil where they walk. This makes it very hard to grow crops there. In most of our communities here, herders are given temporary rights to settle, but they often stay longer than they should and then ask for the same rights to stay and make money. This is a big reason why there are more conflicts in almost all of the states of the federation. Above all, Fulani herdsmen wander into fields when crops are growing, letting their herds eat or step on crops because they aren't paying attention or because the cattle are wandering. This causes tension in the community, which in turn affects our farming and lives because we don't have enough farm products to sell to buyers from Igboland and Yoruba Land. (IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022).*

This finding agrees with what Obi, Odikpa, Edegbo, Abubakar, Onuche, (2021) said about the main causes of conflict between herder and farmer. They said that burning rangeland, polluting water sources, not respecting traditional leaders, and destroying farmland were the main ones. In the same way, Adebayo and Obi, (2019) said that conflict between crop farmer and herder was caused by grazing on harvested crops, theft of farmers' crops by herder, and pulverization of soil, among other things. Herder often burns dry grasslands to make new pastures grow faster. This is a traditional way of doing things. When something is on fire, it often spreads to nearby farms, destroying farms, food stored in barns, and farm tools. Similar studies also found that a whole farm's worth of crops, human lives, relationships, and material resources were lost.

Respondents from Agojeju-Ikpoba of Dekina LGA narrate thus:

*Between May 6<sup>th</sup> 2011, Agojeju-Ikpoba chiefdom experienced her first attack around 7:30pm-11:30pm which left 20 casualties and 20 burnt down houses raping of women and destruction of infrastructural facilities. Agojeju-Ikpoba chiefdom experienced her second attack on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2015 from 10am-3:30pm of which four people died, third attack took place in November 9<sup>th</sup> 2015 from 6pm to 12pm leaving 17 people dead, on 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 Iyade Chiefdom was attacked destroying of agro product such as rice, maize, pidgin pea, Ginea corn, Okoro economic trees: plantation, orange, cashew, palm tree among others burnt down, our young ones cannot go to farm anymore, we can't produce stable crop to sell to feed or sell to buyers from the western and eastern part of the country like; Enugu, Aba, Anambara, Ekiti, Lagos. We live in perpetual fear and distrust in our land, our young men and women are running away from our land and its affecting our development in all aspects. (IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July, 2022).*

Furthermore, the respondents posit that;

*The destruction of farms and farm produce normally occurs when Fulani herder send their cattle to graze during the day or at night. The animals sometimes stray without the knowledge of the herder into farms and on other occasions the herder intentionally sends the animals to farms to graze. The destruction of farms normally occurs at night when Fulani herder sends their cattle to graze. Their inability to control the movement of the herds at night coupled with the number of cattle under the care of one or two herdsmen makes the destruction of farms*

*inevitable. According to the farmer, the greater part of the destruction of farms occurs during the dry season. This is because in the dry season, water becomes scarce and because crops such as plantain and water melon retain water the Fulani herder depend on these food crops as sources of water for their cattle.*

In an interview with a farmer in Bassa/Iyade, he recounted this situation as follows:

*Sometimes they enter your farm at night and by the time you get there they would have eaten your plantain farm. Because the animals are heavier than the plantain trees, they pull down the plantain trees as they move through the farm. It is the Fulani that provoke a lot of the conflicts. The Fulani herdsman would decide to send his animals to graze in the dry season close to your farm. By the time you get to your farm the animals would have eaten your plantain. Because of the dry season plantain always retains water (IDI/M/28 years/Bassa/Iyade/July 22, 2022).*

**Question Two:** Can you please explain how agricultural activities are affected by occurrence of conflict between herdsmen and farmers in your area?

All the respondents were of the opinion that Farmer-Herder conflict thus affects agricultural productivity in the following ways:

#### **Production losses**

*When there is conflict in farming communities, crops rot in barns and other places where they are stored, farmer don't take good care of crops in the field, crops are left on farms, there aren't enough people to work on farms, and planting happens late. This means that there are losses at every stage of production, from making the product to harvesting, storing, and selling it. This is because when herder and farmer fight, it creates a feeling of uncertainty and insecurity, slows down the economy, and causes people to move to safer places. Farmer cut corners on a lot of production tasks, which leads to low yields, low economic returns, and the loss of planting materials. Also, the death and displacement of people in rural areas has a big impact on the work that rural youth and households usually do in agriculture. Most young people move to places where there is less conflict. This makes it hard to find work in places where there is conflict. This hurts the growth of human capital and the productivity of agriculture, which in turn hurts farm decisions and activities that provide a living.*

**(IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022).**

#### **Farmers' displacement**

*Herder-farmer' conflict leads to forced relocation of farmer, increased number of widows and orphan, migration to marginal areas, and unsafe environment for farming. IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022).*

The result backs up the findings of Obi, Uche, and Okeme, (2021), who said that a lot of farmers left their farms after the invading pastoralists destroyed them. This led to a drop in farm yield as farmers left their

more fertile farm land to avoid conflict. Natural resources, like land, are the main way that people in rural areas make a living. If these resources are available and easy to get to, farmers can stay healthy and keep their jobs. Due to the high number of displaced people in one area, forced relocation and migration of farmers could make resources scarcer and increase competition for them. The fact that there are more widows suggests that there have been deaths due to conflict and that this has hurt the ability of households and communities to build up their human capital. Obi, and Uche, (2018) said again that the death of a household member can be a big financial loss, especially if that person was a major source of income for the family. Because many rural households rely on cheap family labor, the cost and availability of labor are affected. Because the environment isn't safe, it's also hard to get to and use social services like education, workshops, trainings, cooperatives, and financial institutions, which are important for a sustainable way of life.

**Low Output:** Before the herdsmen attacked, it was clear that the farmers were making a lot of goods and working on a lot of land. But since these attacks or series of attacks by herder on farmer, the farmer hasn't been able to grow as much food. This is because of things like the farmer being killed and hurt, and also because they're afraid of what will happen next. This is in collaboration with what one of the respondents have to say:

...that majority of the people were cultivating four (4) hectares of land and above during the times of no war nor the attacks however during the conflict, less than 1 or 1 hectare of land was mostly cultivated by the farmer indicating the fear of death as that could not allow them to farm relative to the times of no war nor conflict/attacks. (IDI/F/46years/Dekina/ June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022).

From the aspect of the Fulani herder, on the same issue, in an interview with one of the cattle owners, he narrated an incident in which he said:

a certain Fulani herder sent his cattle to graze in someone 's farm and the farmer accused him (the cattle owner) that his herdsmen were responsible for the destruction of his farm. I, therefore decided to investigate the matter before paying compensation for the damage caused by the animals. He therefore decided to employ the services of three people to accompany him to the said farm to spy on the culprits. So, they went to hide in the farm at night and at about mid-night the herdsmen brought the cattle to graze in the farm. They arrested them and sent them to the farmer who accused the herdsmen of causing the damage to his farm. Coincidentally it turned out that the culprits were actually the herdsmen of the owner of the farm in question. (IDI/M/32 years/Anyigba/Bassa/July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022).

### **Objective Two: To Investigate the Impact of Farmer-Herder On Health Delivery In Kogi State**

There is no doubt that the present clashes between herder and farmer in the study areas has resulted in the destruction of lives and farmlands, health care centres and have become a major threat to the efforts to boost health care service delivery in the rural areas and food production. From Kogi to Benue, Taraba, Nasarawa and Plateau in the North Central region and Zamfara State in the North West, clashes between farmer and herder have left in its trail heavy losses of lives and property. These losses of lives have adversely affected farming activities and other related businesses and socio-

economic activities. This has resulted in a drastic reduction in farm outputs, a development that has heightened the fear of hunger. Already most farmers in the affected states have abandoned farms and schools for the for fear of being attacked by the herder. For the predominantly farming communities of Kogi State, farming is no longer a business as usual. Several farmers have been displaced and dispossessed of their farms by armed men believed to be herdsmen.

**Question Three:** Do you think Farmer-Herder conflict have consequential effect on health service delivery in your area?

*All the respondents 80 representing 100% were of the opinion that Farmer-Herder conflict has adverse consequential effect on not only on lives and property, but also on infrastructural facilities like health centres and medical personnels in the rural areas. (IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July members, 2022).*

**Question Four:** How has Farmer-Herder conflict affected the health sectors development of Kogi State?

According to all the respondents:

Houses were destroyed as a result of the conflict. This implies that, our hospitals and health care centres were greatly affected or destroyed as a result of the attack which might result to problem even after the crisis is over. This is what a farmer said about the issue under study:

*...hmmm, we thank God Almighty for sparing our lives, because some of us are now homeless. For instance, the health facilities found in the study area were destroyed during the conflict between the Fulani herdsmen (IDI/M/39years/Anyigba/Dekina/July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022).*

Findings from the respondents on impact on health delivery in Kogi state shows that;

*The effects of farmer and cattle herder conflict were destruction of health care basic facilities like burning of primary health care centres in rural communities and killing of nurses which many doctors and nurses in some hospitals have relocated and those around don't come to the hospital anymore making it difficult for us here. For example, with 1000 you can get a treatment from our local hospital here, but now we have to travel to Abejukolo, Anyigba or Ankpa to get treatment which cost us a lot due to high cost of transport and hospital bills. **Our** health care centres has collapse (IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022).*

They further states that

*We can't even count the number of farmers we have lost to ill health because of lack of doctors and nurses.*

Destruction of healthcare centre in Agojeju-Ikpoba Chiefdom, (July, 2022)



**Objective Three: To Find Out the Impact of Farmer Herder Conflict On Educational Development.**

There no doubt that conflict between farmer and herder has devastating effect on educational development vis-à-vis literacy level.

**Question Five:** In what has Farmer-Herder conflict affected educational development in your area?

According to the respondents in Iyade/Bassa Community;

*The only Nursery School in our community which was founded by the bassa/Iyade community was burnt down, and the only teacher primary by name Emmanuel was killed and our houses burnt down of which has great effect on our education development, and economic activities.*

*IDI/F/33years/M/39year/F/40year/F/48years/M/58years/F/63years/F/65year/F/35years/F/50years/ 2021).*

Respondents from Agbenema community and Agojeju-Ikpoba were of the opinion that;

*Our children cannot go to school anymore because of fear being attack and it affects our educational development, corps members no longer come to our communities to impact on our children, our schools are empty, and our children we hope to go to school are now sitting at home with us.*

*IDI/F/33years/M/39year/F/40year/F/48years/M/58years/F/63years/F/65year/F/35years/F/50years/ interviewed PTA members, 2021).*

The respondents further narrate that;

*Educational effects of Educational effects: These conflicts lead to closure of primary and secondary schools. When the schools are closed the school timetable of events is adjusted, thereby prolonging the students' duration of study. Some of these schools were build by thw community contribution and not the government (interaction with the respondents) (IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/40year/F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July 2022).*



**Abandoned school in Agbenema community of Omala LGA**



**School closed down in Agojeju-Ikpoba community in Dekina LGA**



*Abandoned Schools in Bassa/Iyade community rural area in Kogi State (Infrastructural facilities)*

**Question Six:** Are you aware of the role of government and various agencies to mitigating factors leading to conflicts between Farmer-Herder conflict?

According to all the respondents;

*Conflict should be expected in an environment of highly fluctuating resource availabilities on unfenced land. A basic premise that we bring to this study is that conflicts that necessarily arise as people pursue diverse livelihood strategies are largely managed effectively at the level of local communities (IDI/F/46years/M/52year/F/ 40year /F/40years/M/54years/F/33years/F/52year/F/35years/F/50years/July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022).*

**Access to productive resources;** People's ability to gain access to the productive resources that are required to pursue a livelihood plays a strong role in shaping resource-related conflicts such as those that exist between herder and farmer. For example, a herder who loses access to local pastures due to the encroachment of fields onto livestock paths will not only have a more difficult time moving his animals to pasture without causing crop damage but also may be less inclined to avoid causing crop damage. A farmer who was interview about the strategies that should be put in place in order to curb the conflict between the farmer and the herder has this to say:

*To my own understand, if the government wants to stop the conflict between the herder and the farmer, I will suggest that the government should provide lands and other productive resources to the people, by so doing, it will reduced the rate of conflict and crises between the herder and the family. For example, a poor farmer whose single field is damaged by a neighbour's livestock is likely to harbour bad feelings about his rich neighbour. A farmer who owns livestock is more likely to have relations with herders from other social groups and understand the constraints faced by herders. In these and other ways, the distribution of access to productive resources helps shape social relationships and how conflict is managed at the level of rural communities. (IDI/F/38years/ July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022).*

**Deployment of Security:** The deployment of security agencies has been a dominant feature of the state and federal government's response to Farmer-Herder conflict. In Plateau state, a Special Task Force – Operation Safe Haven (STF-OSH) – has been deployed since 2001 to restore law and order. This Task Force is composed of officer and infantry of the armed forces, including the police, with the mandate to restore order and stability. Recently, the federal government expanded its mandate to include Kaduna state, thereby replacing Operation Harbin Kunama II. This is in line with what one of the respondents said when he was interviewed.

*For the government to resolve the conflict between the farmers and the herdsman, the government should try and deploy more of its security agents to the affected areas. With that, i believed that normalcy will be brought to play. (IDI/M/29<sup>th</sup> / July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022)*

While a female who was also interview on the same issue have a different view. She said that:

*There are reports that security agencies who are part of JTF and were sent to protect at-risk farmer and herder communities have committed crimes and human rights violations, such as physical torture, extortion, and other forms of gender-based violence against the communities they were deployed to protect. In fact, the deployment of security agencies has often had the unintended consequence of breeding local resentment and further increasing divides, as many communities perceive them to be biased with one side. This perceived or actual bias risks alienating the communities and people they are meant to protect. (IDI/M/29<sup>th</sup> /Abejukolo/ July 12<sup>nd</sup>, 2022)*

**Creation of Grazing Reserves:** In 1965, the northern regional government of Nigeria initiated one of the first attempts to respond to the crisis of pastoralism that was linked to emerging conflicts between farmers and herders in the country. The Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965 created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. The reserves were envisioned to section off large swathes of land to be exclusively used by herders to graze their livestock. While initially considered a legislative solution, population growth, urbanization, and migration encroached on these designated areas, reducing herders' access and usage of the reserves. After series of interview with the respondents, one of them has this to say:

*...the federal government should try and maintain the Northern Region Grazing Reserves Law of 1965 which created corridors for the passage of migrating livestock and 415 grazing reserves throughout the country. I could recall that in 2016, the National Assembly attempted to pass legislation to address conflicts between farmer and herder through the controversial National Grazing Reserve (Establishment) Bill 2016, which ultimately was not passed. This is largely due to the fact that the Land Use Act of 1978 vests all powers related to the regulation of ownership, alienation, acquisition, administration, and management of Nigerian land with the state governors.<sup>9</sup> This attempt and others by the National Assembly*



*to legislate on grazing reserves were in violation of the Land Use Act of 1978 and perceived as a move to usurp the powers of the governors. If this law is still maintained, it will reduced the disputes between the farmer and the herder in Kogi state and Nigeria at large. (IDI/M/29<sup>th</sup> July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021)*

## KEY FINDINGS

1. The study revealed that the Farmer-Herder in the study area affect agricultural productivity via crop damage by cattle, blockage of cattle routes, watering point and encroachment of cattle route by farmers. The study found that, loss of crop, loss of animal, displacement of people and sometimes loss of lives as a result of the conflict as the major effect of the conflict decline in social activities, business, rural-urban migration destruction of health care centers, markets schools which are aspect of rural development and industrialization to a great extent affects rural development.
2. Health care services were severely affected in the rural areas under study and farmer within the locality suffers from these lack of poor health care services
3. Educational sector also suffers immensely as schools in these rural areas were shut down due to this crises thereby undermining rural educational development which advances literacy level which is core indices of rural development.
4. The findings of study clearly shows that the intensification of Farmer-Herder conflict were attributed to some factors such as high level of poverty, illiteracy, weak security personnel at the border, politicking of policies to combat the conflict and Farmer-Herder conflicts has had severe attack on agricultural productivity, health social, economic, environment and educational development in the study area. For example, the environmental impact of Farmer-Herder conflict includes; destruction of Soil for Agricultural production, and health development.
5. On the impact on educational development, Farmer-Herder conflict has affected educational development in the study area negatively resulting to mass exodus of intellectual's closure of secondary schools and has aggravated the illiteracy level in the area. For example, many nursery and primary school and secondary schools were close down due to the mass exodus of tutors and students from the institution as a result of incessant attack of Farmer-Herder conflict, and same applies to many primary and secondary schools.
6. Furthermore, Farmer-Herder conflict has increase poverty in the region, increase unemployment rate, affect access to food/food security, affect access to basic life necessities like health care delivery, infrastructural development in the study area and has resulted in mass relocation of people from the study area to safer places.
7. The above findings are in agreement with Dauda (2014), position that the social impact is so devastating that it has dented the northern region as the bedrock of terrorism.
8. Farmer-Herder conflicts are destructive and have far reaching consequences on national integration in Nigeria if left unchecked quickly. No doubt, such conflicts destroy resources and capable of making different tribes to be at dagger drawn with one another. It therefore calls for quick intervention from the nation's leadership. Knowledge of this fact should equally propel stakeholders, especially herdsmen and farmers to promote cultural, economic, social, religious and political u
9. Conflict in agrarian communities largely revolves on livelihood issues. The results show that in addition to some structural factors, conflicts are associated with livelihood pressure and competition between crop farmers and herdsmen. Specifically, the dominant composite causes revealed in the study are violation of agreement/laws, interference on livelihood

sources, and cultural differences. Consequently, these impacts on agricultural productivity, education and health development of farmers and subsequently, the entire livelihood assets of crop farmers ranging from physical, natural, human, financial, and social assets.

10. The livelihood structure, food security and wellbeing of farmers are threatened and compromised which contribute to poverty, food and nutrition insecurity and poor health of farming communities, and further escalation of conflicts. Therefore, sustainably addressing conflict in farming communities is critical to achieving economic, agricultural development and sustainable livelihood.

## Conclusion

It is clear that farmer-herder conflicts in Kogi State centered on the cattle owners and crop farmers. The causes are seen in terms of competition on land and cattle trespass, land encroachment, Migration of Mbororo migrants among others. Periodical struggle for scarce resources has degenerated into violent conflicts in Omala local government Area between farmer-herder. Since most of the cattle herder do not own or possess the rights to land, they therefore depend absolutely on open land to feed their cattle. Government policies on agriculture, especially the all-year fadama farming, are threats to cattle herders' access to pasture. Acquisition of, additional farms have encroached traditional cattle routes thus drastically reducing the grazing for herders livestock and access to pasture areas and water points. Furthermore, the use of police and courts to resolve conflicts between cattle herders and crop farmers by government has been ineffective as this approach had further contributed to the occurrence of the clashes. All these have instigated insecurity that have encouraged the conflicting parties to take responsibility for their own security and to defend themselves, which is a threat to the sustainability of the federation. Therefore, it is in the interest of the State to end the land encroachment and take concrete steps to address the genuine needs of cattle herders for availability of grazing land, resolve the re-occurring conflicts in the agricultural sector, which currently provides employment to large population of country. Efforts made by the stakeholders to prevent the conflict have been minimal or ineffective, which may have lead to a perception by some communities that they should take responsibility for their own security. These have increased the conflict in the study area. However, the government involvement of all the stakeholders has reduced the conflict, but the conflict is still ongoing.

This study on Farmer-Herder relations and conflict management has shown that conflict, in some form or another, is common in agro-pastoral communities of Nigeria. It is clear that conflict has the potential to affect the livelihoods of farmer and herder alike. The relationships between farmer and herder in the Kogi State are multi-dimensional and like most social relationships involve both cooperation and conflict. To understand Farmer-Herder conflict one needs to consider the Farmer-Herder relationship more broadly than the social interaction concerned with use of common natural resources. The ability of rural communities to prevent and manage conflict is largely based on the routes and strength of communication between herding and farming interests, respected community leaders, and leaders in neighboring communities.

Escalating conflicts between herder and farmer are among Nigeria's most pressing security challenges. This could potentially generate bloodshed on an even wider scale unless President Buhari's government makes ending this violence a national priority. State governments also need to formulate and implement steps to address the needs and grievances of all sides transparently and equitably. Strengthening law enforcement, supporting local conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, establishing and protecting grazing reserves would all make a significant and immediate difference. In the longer term, the greater challenge will be curbing the arms influx and, crucially, addressing the environmental trends that are forcing herder south. Failure would spell greater danger for a country already battling other severe security challenges and, potentially, for the

wider West and Central African region. Overall, the local institutional arrangements are functional and conflicts are effectively managed at local levels based on results from interviews in the study sites.

### **Recommendations**

Deducing from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. **Objective One:** Examine the extent to which Farmer-Herder conflicts have affected agricultural activities in Kogi State

#### **Recommendations:**

Farmer-herder conflicts in Kogi State require a multifaceted approach to address their root causes and promote sustainable coexistence. Recommendations include strengthening local conflict resolution mechanisms, implementing land use planning, promoting community engagement, introducing sustainable resource management practices, supporting alternative livelihoods, investing in rural infrastructure, enhancing security measures, implementing conflict early warning systems, reviewing and strengthening legal frameworks, providing training and capacity-building programs, collaborating with neighboring states, and supporting ongoing research to monitor the dynamics of conflicts. These recommendations can contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable coexistence between farmers and herders in Kogi State, reducing the impact of conflicts on agricultural activities and fostering a more cooperative environment. By implementing these recommendations in a coordinated and participatory manner, Kogi State can reduce the impact of these conflicts on agricultural activities.

- ii. **Objective Two:** Investigate the effect of Farmer-Herder conflict on Healthcare Delivery in Kogi State

#### **Recommendations:**

Farmer-Herder conflicts in Kogi State can impact healthcare delivery by disrupting services, increasing health risks, and causing community displacement. To mitigate these effects, measures should be implemented to ensure security for healthcare facilities, introduce mobile health clinics, establish emergency medical response teams, implement telemedicine services, conduct community health education campaigns, collaborate with NGOs and international agencies, provide logistical support for healthcare providers, foster cross-sectoral collaboration, invest in resilient health systems, implement early warning systems for health emergencies, and engage local communities in healthcare planning and delivery. These recommendations aim to ensure that communities have access to essential health services even in challenging circumstances, thereby reducing the impact of these conflicts on healthcare delivery.

- iii. **Objective Three:** Ascertain implication of Farmer-Herder conflicts on educational development in Kogi State

#### **Recommendations:**

Farmer-Herder conflicts in Kogi State have significantly impacted the education system, leading to disruptions and displacement of students. To mitigate these challenges, Kogi State government through the commissioner of education and supervisory council on education across the 21 local government council should implement safe school initiatives, establish alternative learning spaces, implement flexible school schedules, introduce mobile education units, provide teacher training on conflict sensitivity, establish psychosocial support services, engage local communities in education planning, develop reintegration programs for displaced students, strengthen school infrastructure, improve access to ICT, advocate for education, and integrate conflict resolution education into the curriculum. These measures will ensure continuity of education and promote understanding,

tolerance, and non-violent conflict resolution among students. By implementing these recommendations, Kogi State commissioner of education and joint security team can work towards mitigating the impact of these conflicts on educational development, ensuring continued access to quality education even in challenging circumstances.

- iv. **Objective Four:** Access the strategies adopted in mitigating Farmer-Herders Conflicts in Bassa, Dekina and Omala L.G.As

#### **Recommendations:**

Mitigating Farmer-Herder conflicts in Bassa, Dekina, and Omala Local Government Areas requires a combination of strategies. These include community dialogue and mediation, conflict sensitivity training, customary conflict resolution mechanisms, resource mapping and land use planning, livestock management programs, early warning systems, security collaboration, livelihood diversification, infrastructure development, legal frameworks and enforcement, community engagement and sensitization, collaboration with NGOs and stakeholders, and research and data collection. These strategies aim to address the root causes of conflicts and promote sustainable coexistence.

Community dialogue sessions promote understanding and communication between Farmers and Herders, while conflict sensitivity training enhances awareness of triggers and potential solutions. Customary conflict resolution mechanisms are strengthened, and sustainable livestock management programs are implemented. Security collaboration and community engagement are also crucial for effective enforcement of laws and regulations.

Adopting a holistic approach that involves local communities, traditional leaders, security agencies, and other stakeholders is crucial for the success of these mitigation strategies in addressing Farmer-Herder conflicts in Bassa, Dekina, and Omala L.G.As

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